

Serial No. 09/682,899

RD-27,885

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the consideration shown by the Office as evidenced by the Office Action mailed on October 19, 2004. In that Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 1-113, 116-119, 121-132, 134-135, and 137-140 stand rejected. On the other hand, the Examiner also stated that claims 13-27, 29-30, 33, 49-63, 66, 79-101, 118-132, 135, and 138 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In reviewing the details of the Office Action and previous Office Actions, Applicants believe the latter statement to be controlling; that is, all pending claims 1-113, 116-119, 121-132, 134-135, and 137-140 were rejected EXCEPT for those claims listed above as claims objected to.

In this Response, Applicants have amended claims 1, 11, 14, 28, 31, 35, 36, 104, 119, 139, and 140; and have cancelled claims 9, 10, 13, 30, 33, 37-103, 118, 135, and 138. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application by the Examiner in light of the following remarks offered in response to the Office Action.

Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 35, 36, 104, 139, and 140 to incorporate one or more limitations of claims stated by the Examiner to recite allowable subject matter; consequently Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are now allowable over the applied prior art. Claim 1 incorporates the limitations of claims 13, 30, and 33 in an alternative construction. Claim 35 incorporates the limitations of claims 30 and 33, again in an alternative construction, and claim 36 incorporates the limitations of claim 13. Similarly, claim 104 incorporates alternative limitations from claims 118, 135, and 138. Claims 139 incorporate alternative limitations from claims 135 and 138, and claim 140 incorporates the limitations of claim 118. All other independent claims and their respective dependent claims have been cancelled. As the pending independent claims and their respective dependent claims now include limitations reciting allowable subject matter, either directly or due to dependency, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the presented rejections have been overcome by the present amendments.

Applicants note the Examiner's argument concerning the definition of the term "tip insert." It is noted that the issue is now moot in view of the present response. However, Applicants merely want the record to reflect that the amendments made herein in no way

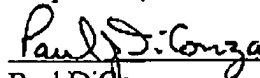
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represent acquiescence to the Examiner's statements concerning the definition of "tip insert" for the purposes of the present application. Applicants respectfully maintain their position that the Examiner is incorrectly reading the definition as set forth in the present specification. Applicants' position on this matter has been adequately stated in previous prosecution and need not be restated here.

In light of the remarks presented herein, Applicants submit that the case is in condition for immediate allowance and respectfully request such action. If, however, any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



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